pter chief at Mack

Lehigh Countian is 'Pro Pilot of Y

WILLIAM D. KULP JR.
Business Editor

B. Sweeney, 33, of German- is regarded as something of a among the nation's pro- pilots — a phenomenon you expect in the 1970s.

s out, however, that Sweeney, ef pilot-helicopter operations Trucks, Inc., was picked to he first annual Professional he Year award because he's chart new paths in aviation.

ward was presented to a few weeks ago by Pro- Pilot magazine's editor, Mur- ith, who noted that the Mack ot was selected from a field e nation's 19,000 professional had been nominated for the

hat with Sweeney revealed uld have been easy for the o choose him for the award." y, what the pilot has done is e the Federal Aviation Ad- n that helicopters should be fly as helicopters in instru- her and not as fixed wing

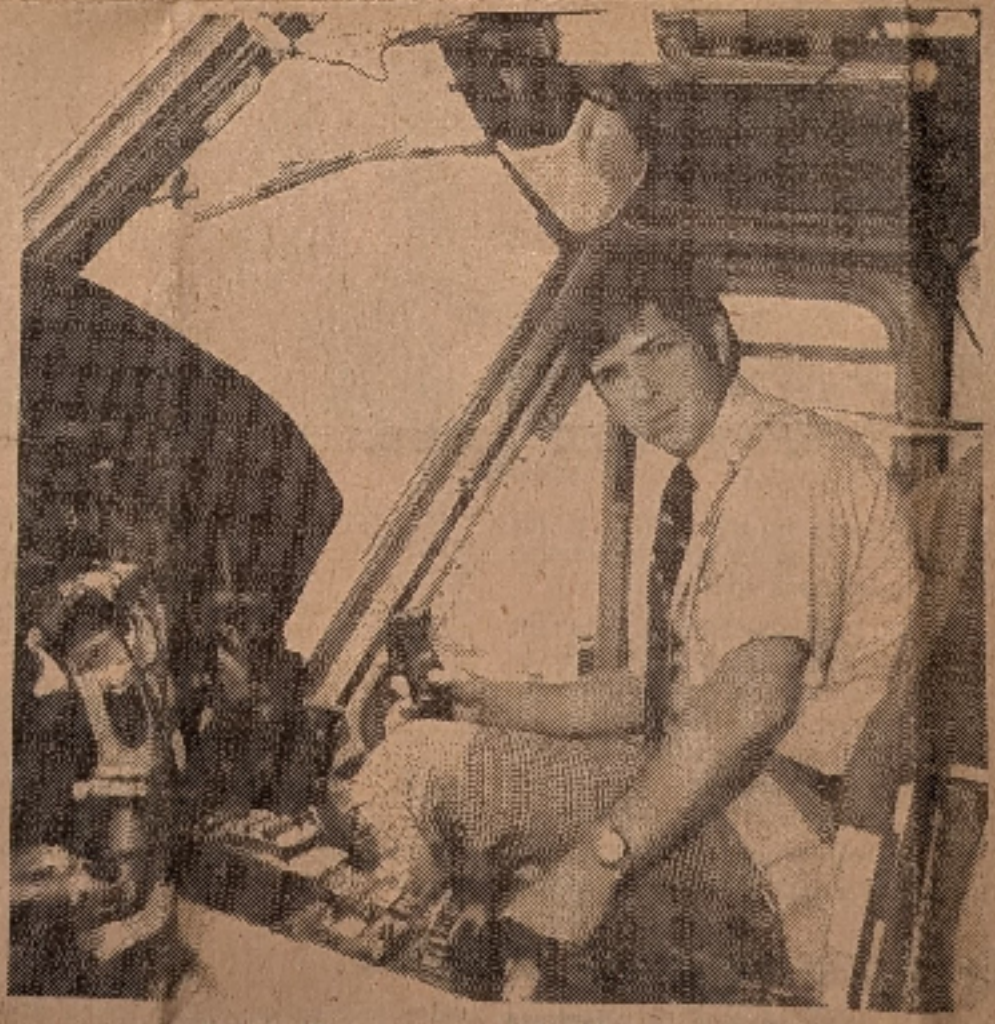
ow Sweeney explained it:" 20 years ago, the military y wanted to fly helicopters ather requiring instrument), and they gave manufac- ifications to design copters h weather.

e military waived the re- for some handling charac- e said.

ve in corporate aviation nd asked the FAA to give s, the FAA gave them to us benefit of a waiver."

eeney faced, as Mack's pilot, were regulations ow a fixed wing aircraft r example, even though a oesn't fly like an airplane, ant that the control stick in d to react to measuring he same way a control airplane does.

dible result of the FAA's t any helicopter certified nstrument conditions has d of "black box" attached



Pete Sweeney at the controls

to the flight stick to build in the same resistances to moving the stick as a fixed wing plane has — even though the copter doesn't have flaps and other load factors.

Sweeney took the lead in the fight to have the FAA recognize, as he describes it, that "helicopters and fixed wing aircraft are as different as bicycles and unicycles."

Adding some gear to the helicopters so that they'd meet the same handling characteristics as fixed wing aircraft was easy enough — even though it did no more than meet bureaucratic criteria.

But where Sweeney really won a battle was in getting the FAA to allow helicopters to fly from Mack headquarters directly to heliports in New York City without having to go first to either Queen City Airportor Kennedy International at either end of the flight.

"Airplanes have to use runways, but helicopters do not," Sweeney said. "Everything in a terminal control area, such as runway alignment, is predicated on the wind for landings or takeoffs. But helicopters don't need this; all we need is destination alignment, and we can set down."

Since time is important to Mack customers and executives, it made no sense to have to overfly downtown Manhattan destinations and go first to an airport just because weather changed the rules for flying.

But until Sweeney began fighting for the shorter routes, the Mack helicopter on bad weather days had to follow the same routes as fixed wing aircraft, adding 20 minutes of flying to each end of a 40-minute trip.

He and others in the helicopter manufacturing field worked out a com-

promise route wit Mack headquarter bor.

The route allo directly to the har established helic New York City ar

"We've been a years, and we've record. We've pro when operated lik the job," Sweene

"For Mack, the lot; it may mea tween giving a p chance to see the losing the custom

He emphasized responsible for about. He credi turers and coope ficials for what's

But the outco probably the onl United States t private use heli conditions.

"We didn't d Sweeney said. economically via makes an averag each day betwe York, and an idle item. And to rely going to airports tation to and fr mean fewer c Mack

Now that one Sweeney is worki — the Northea which would allo do the same thin route between B Glen Gilbert, working on the consultant.

Meanwhile, directly to 30th West Side, Wall 34th Street and

Sweeney ca the FAA Aviati early this year, address on the rotary wing air instrument weat